

Policy for making adjustments to assessment tasks for students with a Disability/Specific Learning Difference

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The University is committed to creating a supportive environment where all students are able to reach their full potential and succeed with their chosen course of study.
- 1.2 All students will be assessed on their ability to meet the learning outcomes of a unit, by completing specified assessment requirements which are marked against published assessment criteria. In some circumstances relating to a disability/specific learning difference (SpLD), it may transpire that students are unable to succeed using the assessment methods specified in the unit, but would be able to fulfil the learning outcomes of the unit through one or more alternative assessment tasks. The exception to this is where the specified method of assessment is prescribed by a professional body (e.g. RIBA, ARB).
- 1.3 Students are encouraged to notify the University of any disability before they arrive, and are invited to discuss their learning needs with the Learning Support Manager. In all cases, students should be encouraged to seek support through reasonable adjustments before any adjustment to published assessment requirements is considered.
- 1.4 Any adjustments to assessment tasks will be managed in such a way as to avoid the introduction of any source of unfairness in the assessment process.

2. Policy

- 2.1 The policy is based on the principle that reasonable adjustment to the assessment tasks prescribed in any unit should be allowed for a student who can achieve the learning outcomes but is prevented by their disability/SpLD from demonstrating this through the usual assessment methods (subject to the exclusion in section 1.2).
- 2.2 The policy covers all Further Education and Higher Education students of the University who have a disability/SpLD, provided that evidence has been disclosed to a member of staff prior to the point of assessment.¹ Variation to the prescribed assessment in any unit can only be approved if the student has disclosed his or her disability to the Course Leader, Head of School, or Learning Support Manager.

¹ Note that under DDA 1995 as amended by SENDA 2001, the University is deemed to have been made aware of a disability, if the student has notified a member of staff of the institution about his or her condition. It is therefore important that information is passed quickly to the Course Leader and Learning Support Manager. Where a disclosure is made to a member of staff in confidence, every effort should be made to encourage the student to disclose his or her disability to the Learning Support Manager at the earliest opportunity.

- 2.3 A disability is defined as a particular physical, sensory or psychological condition that has a long term adverse effect on someone's ability to access the learning environment as compared to others. This may include students who are: dyslexic, deaf, blind/partially sighted, have mobility difficulties, mental health difficulties, Asperger's Syndrome/autism and unseen conditions (e.g. epilepsy) and some short-term illnesses, which may be particularly debilitating.
- 2.4 Students declaring a disability/SpLD through the admissions process are invited to meet with the Learning Support Manager to discuss their needs. Details of agreed learning support, and the form of any reasonable adjustment to assessment will be agreed by the Learning Support Manager with the student and recorded on a Learning Support Agreement. This will be circulated to the Course Leader, Campus Registrar and Learning Support Tutor and should be acted on for all assessments. The Course Leader will circulate the Learning Support Agreement to the Unit Leader(s) of the affected unit(s).
- 2.6 For the UAL AB policy on reasonable adjustments please refer to section 5 of the UAL AB Assessment Policy: <http://www.arts.ac.uk/media/arts/about-ual/ual-awarding-body/documents/UAL-Awarding-Body-Assessment-Policy-Version-6.0-13-08-14.pdf>
- 2.5 For adjustments to tasks that do not form part of reasonable adjustments articulate within the negotiated Learning Support Agreement, requests for alternative assessment tasks should be submitted, together with the appropriate supporting evidence, as soon as possible and before the submission date for the relevant unit(s).

3. Major adjustment(s) to assessment tasks

- 3.1 Adjustment of assessment tasks relates to a student's lack of ability to demonstrate learning outcomes regardless of the reasonable adjustment that are applied as a matter of course (e.g. one to one dyslexia tuition, use of assistive technology). Examples of the reason why an adjustment to task might be required include:
- Significant difficulties using written language;
 - Physical ability to carry out particular tasks;
 - Physical constraints of the environment – for example access to particular equipment/resources;
 - Sensory or communication difficulties.
- 3.2 Major adjustments to tasks are those where the nature of the assignment to meet the learning outcomes is changed. The introduction of such changes may also result in the creation of potential unfairness, which will be closely monitored by the Board of Examiners.
- 3.3 Major adjustments cover a wide range of circumstances, but may include the following examples:
- use of a third person to complete practical work;
 - verbal presentation or submission in place of a written assignment or examination;

- PowerPoint presentation in place of a verbal presentation or vice versa;
 - Use of a multimedia presentation in conjunction with a reduced word count.
- 3.4 The nature of major adjustments will mean that the work will often be easily distinguished from that of other students, as it will often be in a different format, but the work will be subject to the usual verification processes. Major adjustments are the responsibility of the Chair of the Board of Examiners, and approval may not be delegated to another member of staff. The Chair may, however, wish to discuss the case with other officers of the University such as the Executive Dean, Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, Course/Unit Leader(s), Learning Support Manager and the student before reaching a decision on the most appropriate assessment task.
- 3.5 All requests for major adjustments to prescribed assessment tasks must be made by the Course Leader to the Chair of the Board of Examiners via the Campus Registrar. The Learning Support Manager may be consulted and invited to comment on the suitability of the proposed adjustment.
- 3.6 The documentation provided by the student must include appropriate professional evidence of the nature of the disability and/or a prior Learning Support Agreement (LSA), together with an explanation as to why a different assessment task is needed.
- 3.7 The proposal for an alternative assessment task should be drafted by the Course/Unit Leader in consultation with the student and the Learning Support Manager.
- 3.8 In approving the adjustment, the Chair of the Board of Examiners should take into consideration the following:
- I. the appropriateness of the proposed adjustment

i.e. whether the adjustment proposed would allow the student to demonstrate the learning outcomes of that item of assessment. Specifically, the use of a scribe, for instance, may require additional skills which are not normally required on that component.
 - II. the potential introduction of unfairness into the assessment process

i.e. whether the revised method might result in the student being either advantaged or disadvantaged when compared to other students.
 - III. how the alternative task for assessment ensures equivalence with the original assessment requirement in terms of volume and standard of achievement required

i.e. if the revised method leads to a different form of work (such as a viva voce examination instead of a written assignment), how to ensure that no advantage or disadvantage accrues, with specific attention paid to how other students might have performed had they been assessed in this manner. For example, the length of any

viva voce examination that replaces a written assignment will need to be allocated a 'wordage equivalent' to a piece of written work.

IV. any issues surrounding professional accreditation

i.e. if the course leads to professional accreditation and the assessments have been approved by that body, whether the external examiner(s) or the professional body should be involved in the approval of any variations.

vi. the implication of any adjustment for other units

i.e. if an adjustment to an assessment task is agreed, consideration should be given to whether this would apply to other units on which the student is enrolled, or is likely to enrol at a future stage.

4. Procedure

- 4.1 Any student who believes that they require a special form of assessment for any part of their course of study should inform their Unit Leader or Course Leader as soon as possible.
- 4.2 Where a major adjustment is considered necessary and is not included as a reasonable adjustment within the negotiated Learning Support Agreement, the Course Leader will discuss the assessment needs with the student, the Unit Leader and the Learning Support Manager (where appropriate) to determine what form any reasonable adjustment to assessment should take. The Course Leader may also consult with other officers of the University as appropriate and may seek the guidance of the External Examiner for the unit(s) in question. The Course Leader will complete the *Request for Adjustment of Assessment Tasks Form* with details of recommended adjustments and forward it to the Campus Registrar.
- 4.3 The approval of the form of any major adjustment is the responsibility of the Chair of the Board of Examiners. Once a *Request for Adjustment of Assessment Methods Form* has been completed by the Course Leader and forwarded to the Campus Registrar, as indicated in 4.2 above, the Campus Registrar will forward the form to the Chair of the Board of Examiners.
- 4.4 The Chair of the Board of Examiners may not delegate approval relating to major adjustments to another member of staff. The Chair may wish to discuss the case with other officers of the University such as the Executive Dean, Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, Course/Unit Leader(s), Learning Support Manager and the student before reaching a decision on the most appropriate assessment task.
- 4.5 Once approved, the Campus Registrar will notify the student of the approved adjustment and forward a copy of the form to the student and will send copies of the completed form to the student's Course Leader, the Learning Support Manager and the Department of Quality Assurance and Enhancement. The supporting medical or other evidence will also be forwarded to the Learning Support Manager.

- 4.6 The Chair may, if appropriate, reject the request for a major adjustment and decide that the task can be completed with the reasonable adjustments as determined within the student's Learning Support Agreement.
- 4.7 The Course Leader will forward a copy of the *Request for Adjustment of Assessment Methods Form* to the relevant Unit Leader(s).
- 4.8 The Learning Support Manager will be responsible for arranging and organising any specialist support staff required as part of the adjustment to assessment.

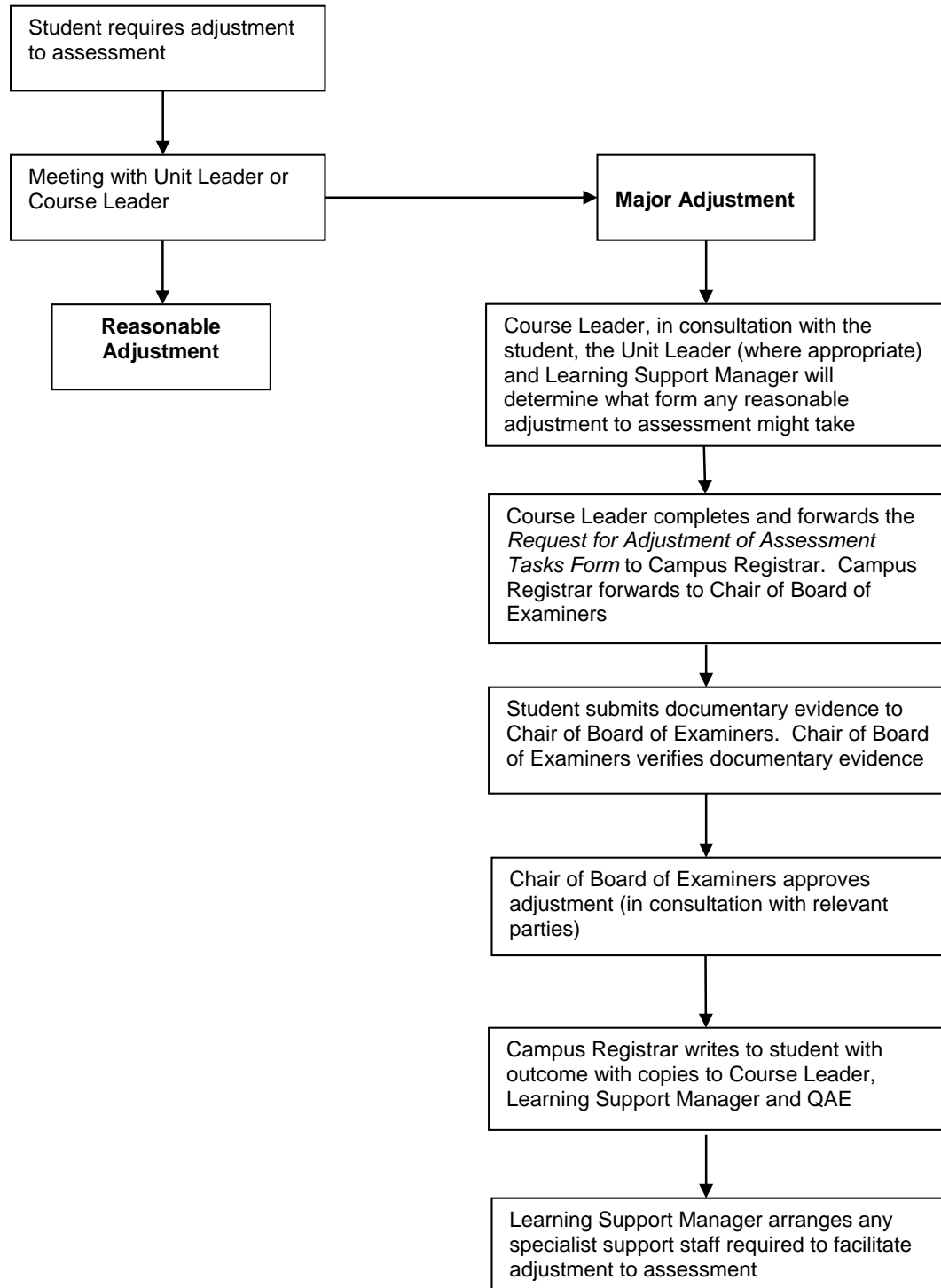
5. Student records

- 5.1 A copy of the completed *Request for Adjustment of Assessment Methods Form* will be retained by the Campus Registry and, where appropriate, the Learning Support Manager, together with the supporting evidence, for the lifetime of the student file. The Course Leader and Unit Leader(s) will retain a copy of the *Request for Adjustment of Assessment Methods Form* for the duration of the period during which the student is studying the specific unit(s) affected, after which time all copies will be returned to the Campus Registry for destruction.

6. Monitoring

- 6.1 The Board of Examiners will record all adjustments to assessment in the minutes of the meeting.

Adjustments to Assessment Policy Diagram



University for the Creative Arts

Request for an Adjustment of Assessment Task Form

Forms must be completed as soon as possible and before the submission date of the relevant unit. Corroborative evidence must be attached. Please read the guidance notes attached to this form.

Section A: Personal details

Surname_____	Forename(s)_____
Student ID Number: _____	Course _____

Section B: Unit(s) for which an alternative form of assessment is being sought

Unit Code	Unit Title	Unit Credit Value	Unit Tutor
-----	-----	-----	-----
-----	-----	-----	-----
-----	-----	-----	-----
-----	-----	-----	-----

Section C: Information on student's disability and difficulty with undertaking published assessment task(s)

Nature of disability/SpLD:
Evidence attached*/available through Learning Support Manager* *Delete as appropriate
Brief description of the difficulty with the assessment task identified:

Section D: To be completed by the Course Leader

Date of meeting with student: / /
Date of consultation with Learning Support Manager: / /
Details of any proposed major adjustment to assessment, following consultation with Learning Support Manager and student:
Name of Course Leader:.....
Signature: Date.....
Signature of Student: Date.....

Section E: Decision of the Chair of the Board of Examiners

1. Documentary evidence seen? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable <input type="checkbox"/>
2. MAJOR ADJUSTMENT TO TASK
Approved: YES/NO
Rejected: YES/NO <i>Please state reason(s) below</i>
Treat as <u>reasonable adjustment</u> : YES/NO
Chair's recommendations for adjustment to assessment tasks: <i>(Include additional sheets as necessary)</i>
Was an external examiner consulted? YES/NO
If YES, please state name:
Signed by Chair of Board of Examiners: Date.....
Name:

For Campus Registry Use

Date request received:

Date forwarded to: (a) Chair of Board of Examiners:

(b) Learning Support Manager:

Date decision received: Date of letter to student:.....

Circulated to: Course Leader

Learning Support Manager

Quality Assurance and Enhancement

Guidance Notes for Course Leaders

1. This guidance should be read in conjunction with the policy for making adjustments to assessment for students with a disability/SpLD.
2. The policy covers all Further Education and Higher Education students of the University who have a disability/specific learning difference.
3. This form is for adjustments to assessment tasks that do not form part of a pre-negotiated Learning Support Agreement. Requests should be made **as soon as possible and before the submission date of the relevant unit**.
4. On receiving a request for an adjustment to assessment from a student, the Course Leader should meet with the student as soon as possible. The Course Leader should also discuss the assessment needs with the Unit Leader (where appropriate) and the Learning Support Manager and may seek guidance from the External Examiner for the unit(s) in question. The form should be completed at this meeting, and should be signed by both the Course Leader and the student.
5. All requests must be signed by the Learning Support Manager to confirm that formal, written evidence from an appropriate expert (such as a medical practitioner, educational psychologist or occupational therapist) has been obtained **in all cases and can be provided to the Chair of the Board of Examiners** if required and **subject to student consent**. Where this has been made available to the Disability Manager prior to the request, this should be indicated in section C of the *Request for an Adjustment of Assessment Task Form*.
6. **Major adjustment**
 - 6.1 Major adjustments are those where the nature of the assignment to meet the learning outcomes is changed and where reasonable adjustment has been applied and the student still experiences a disadvantage as a result of the assessment method. The introduction of such changes may also result in the creation of potential unfairness, which will be closely monitored by the Board of Examiners.
 - 6.2 Major adjustments may cover a wide range of circumstances, but may include the following examples:
 - use of a third person to complete practical work;
 - verbal presentation or submission in place of a written assignment or examination;
 - PowerPoint presentation in place of a verbal presentation, or vice versa;
 - use of a multimedia presentation in conjunction with a reduced word count;
 - A Cloze test (i.e. a written answer/statement with key ideas, concepts and dates left as blanks)

- 6.3 The nature of major adjustments will mean that the work will often be easily distinguished from that of other students, as it will often be in a different format, but the work will be subject to the usual verification processes.
- 6.4 Major adjustments are the responsibility of the Chair of the Board of Examiners, and approval may **not** be delegated to another member of staff. The Chair may, however, wish to discuss the case with other officers of the University such as the Executive Dean, Head of QAE, Course/Unit Leader(s), Learning Support Manager, the External Examiner(s) for the unit(s) affected and the student before reaching a decision on the most appropriate assessment task.
- 6.5 All requests for major adjustments to prescribed assessment methods must be made by the Course Leader to the Chair of the Board of Examiners, via the Campus Registrar. The Disability Manager may be consulted and invited to comment on the suitability of the proposed adjustment as well as offer guidance on practice elsewhere in the sector.

The Learning Support Manager will be required to confirm that there is evidence to support the claim for an adjustment to assessment task.

Guidance for Chairs of Boards of Examiners

7. Consideration of major adjustments
- 7.1 In considering major adjustments the Chair of the Board of Examiners, in consultation with the Head of School, Course Leader and the Learning Support Manager, will determine what form any reasonable adjustment to assessment may take. The Chair may, at his/her discretion, convene a meeting with the student as part of these deliberations. The Chair may also consult with other officers of the University as appropriate and may seek the guidance from the External Examiner for the unit(s) in question. The Chair of the Board of Examiners will complete the form with details of recommended adjustments and forward it to the Campus Registrar.
- 7.2 The Chair may, if appropriate, reject the request for a major adjustment and treat the claim as a reasonable adjustment.
- 8. Criteria for consideration**
- 8.1 In considering the adjustment, the Chair of the Board of Examiners should take into consideration the following:
- i. the appropriateness of the proposed adjustment

i.e. whether the adjustment proposed would allow the student to demonstrate the learning outcomes of that item of assessment. Specifically, the use of a scribe, for instance, may require additional skills which are not normally required on that task.

- ii. the potential introduction of unfairness into the assessment process

i.e. whether the revised method might result in the student being either advantaged or disadvantaged when compared against other students.

- iii. how the alternative task for assessment ensures equivalence with the original assessment requirement in terms of volume and standard of achievement required

i.e. if the revised method leads to a different form of work (such as a viva voce examination instead of a written assignment), how to ensure that no advantage or disadvantage accrues, with specific attention paid to how other students might have performed had they been assessed in this manner. For example, the length of any viva voce examination that replaces a written assignment will need to be allocated a 'wordage equivalent' to a piece of written work.

- iv. any issues surrounding professional accreditation

i.e. if the course leads to professional accreditation and the assessments have been approved by that body, whether the external examiner(s) or the professional body should be involved in the approval of any variations.

- vi. the implication of any adjustment for other units

i.e. if an adjustment to an assessment task is agreed, consideration should be given to whether this would apply to other units on which the student is enrolled, or is likely to enrol at a future stage.